Chapter Fifteen
Organizational Communication in the Internet Age

Perceptual Process Model of Communication

Model is based on notion that people create meaning in their own minds. Elements of model include:

- **Sender**: Person, group, or organization that communicate with a receiver.
- **Encoding**: Sender translates thoughts into a code or language that can be understood by others.
- **The Message**: The output of encoding.
- **Selecting a Medium**: Method used to communicate. All media have advantages and disadvantages.
Perceptual Process Model of Communication

(continued)

- **Decoding.** Receiver converts a message into a form that can be interpreted.
- **Creating Meaning.** Receivers interpret message by using components of social information processing.
- **Feedback.** Receivers response to a message.
- **Noise.** Anything that interferes with the transmission and understanding of a message.
A Contingency Model for Selecting Communication Media

- **High Complexity of Problem/Situation**
  - Overload zone (medium provides more information than necessary)
  - Zone of effective communication
  - Oversimplification zone (medium does not provide necessary information)

- **Low Complexity of Problem/Situation**
  - Formal numeric
  - Formal written
  - Personal written
  - Telephone
  - Face-to-face

One-Way vs. Two-Way Communication

**One-Way**
- **Advantages**
  - Fast
  - Nonthreatening to sender

- **Disadvantages**
  - Probability of misunderstanding
  - Receiver resentment
  - Receiver frustration

**Two-Way**
- **Advantages**
  - Clarification of message
  - Receiver input
  - Sender/Receiver involvement

- **Disadvantages**
  - More time-consuming
  - Threatening to sender
Tips for Improving Nonverbal Communication Skills

- Maintain eye contact
- Occasionally nod your head in agreement
- Smile and show animation
- Lean toward the speaker
- Speak at a moderate rate
- Use an assuring tone

Hierarchical Communication

- Managers provide downward communication about
  - job instructions
  - job rationale
  - organizational procedures and practices
  - feedback about performance
  - indoctrination of goals
- Employees provide upward communication about
  - themselves
  - co-workers
  - organizational practices and policies
  - what needs to be done and how to do it
- Timely and accurate hierarchical communication promotes individual and organizational success
Communication Distortion

Communication Distortion: occurs when an employee purposely modifies the content of a message.

- Communication distortion is more likely when
  - an employee’s supervisor has high upward influence
  - an employee’s supervisor has the power to reward and punish
  - an employee aspires to getting promoted and moving up the organizational hierarchy
  - an employee does not trust his or her manager

Basic Elements of a Complete Message

- The IDEA of the message
- The FEELING that goes with the idea
- The REASON that a particular feeling is associated with the idea
The Grapevine

The Grapevine: represents the unofficial communication system of the informal organization.

- The grapevine is characterized most frequently as a cluster pattern in which one individual passes along information to other people, who in turn communicate the information to selected others faster than formal channels.
- About 75 percent accurate.
- Used when people are insecure and faced with organizational change.
- Used by employees to acquire the majority of their on-the-job information.

Barriers to Effective Communication

- **Process Barriers**: involve all components of the perceptual model of communication.
- **Personal Barriers**: involve components of an individual’s communication competence and interpersonal dynamics between people communicating.
- **Physical Barriers**: pertain to the physical distance between people communicating.
- **Semantic Barriers**: relate to the different understanding and interpretations of the words we use to communicate.
Listening Styles

- **Results-style** listeners are interested in hearing the bottom line or final conclusion of a message before asking questions. They are:
  - direct
  - action oriented
  - focused on the present
  - problem solvers
  - interested in clearly stated conclusions

- **Reasons-style** listeners are interested in hearing the rationale behind a message. They are:
  - concerned with whether or not a solution is practical and reasonable
  - prone to weigh and balance all information
  - likely to argue, out loud or internally
  - intolerant of communications that are disorganized
  - interested in knowing “why” a sender believes in whatever he or she is communicating

Listening Styles (continued)

- **Process-style** listeners like to discuss issues in detail and prefer to receive background information prior to discussing an issue. They are:
  - people oriented
  - interested in all the background or supporting information associated with an issue
  - very interested in obtaining high quality solutions
  - future oriented
  - have ongoing conversations
  - indirect
  - concerned with “how” something will be accomplished and in identifying the benefits of proposed solutions

For class discussion: Identify which listening styles are most and least compatible. How can your awareness of listening styles improve your communication competence?